

MAYOR & COUNCIL AGENDA COVER SHEET

MEETING DATE:

October 7, 2002

RESPONSIBLE STAFF:

Jennifer Russel, Director
Planning and Code Adm.

AGENDA ITEM:

(please check one)

	Presentation
	Proclamation/Certificate
	Appointment
	Public Hearing
	Historic District
	Consent Item
	Ordinance
X	Resolution
	Policy Discussion
	Work Session Discussion Item
	Other:

PUBLIC HEARING HISTORY:

(Please complete this section if agenda item is a public hearing)

Introduced	
Advertised	
Hearing Held	
Record Held Open	
Policy Discussion	

TITLE:

Resolution of the Mayor and City Council Adopting the Master Plan Themes to Guide Land Use Decisions

SUPPORTING BACKGROUND:

The Mayor and City Council and the Planning Commission held a series of work sessions to develop the nine themes that will guide the land use decisions of the current Master Plan revisions.

Staff has incorporated all of the Mayor and Council guidance, and the themes are ready for adoption.

DESIRED OUTCOME:

Adopt Resolution

Resolution No. _____

**RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
ADOPTING THE MASTER PLAN THEMES
TO GUIDE LAND USE DECISIONS**

WHEREAS, the City of Gaithersburg has undertaken a comprehensive revision of the Master Plan as directed by R-08-02 adopted on January 7, 2002 to address the regional press of growth; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council and the Planning Commission have held a series of public work sessions to develop the nine global themes that will guide the land use decisions of the current Master Plan revision; and

WHEREAS, the revision of the land use element and the supporting elements including Smart Growth, Housing, Community Facilities, Sensitive Areas/Natural Resources, Transportation, Bikeways and Pedestrian Plans, and Historic Preservation continues currently based on the content of said themes with comprehensive adoption thereof scheduled for 2003; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council and Planning Commission have approved a series of objectives and actions to implement each of the themes:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and City Council of Gaithersburg that the attached Master Plan themes dealing with Identity, Redevelopment, Town Centers, Environment, Transportation, Community Facilities, Housing, Economic Development, and Education will serve to guide the City's future Master Plan decisions.

ADOPTED by the Mayor and City Council this 7th day of October, 2002.

SIDNEY A. KATZ, Mayor and
President of the Council

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that the foregoing
Resolution was adopted by the City Council
in public meeting assembled on the 7th day
of October, 2002.

David B. Humpton, City Manager

REVISED MASTER PLAN THEMES

October 1, 2002

The following Themes have been developed by the Mayor and City Council to guide land use decisions during the Master Plan process. Each Theme does not stand alone. They all must be considered as Master Plan decisions are made.

THEME 1 – IDENTITY

Gaithersburg is a community that...

Has a remarkable sense of place, with a distinct identity and strong heritage, characterized by attractive public spaces.

Objective A: Improve appearance of City boundaries to emphasize the sense of place.

- Action 1: Identify and prioritize location of entrance features.
- Action 2: Design and create distinctive entry features.
- Action 3: Identify and prioritize streetscape improvement areas.
- Action 4: Evaluate potential annexations.

Objective B: Design attractive public and private outdoor places such as parks, squares, streetscapes, and courtyards.

- Action 1: Require developers to install art in public places where appropriate.
- Action 2: Identify and prioritize pocket parks throughout the City.
- Action 3: Develop a master plan for art in public places.
- Action 4: Enhance City identity of existing parks through signage, trash receptacles, landscape, lighting, etc., that is truly unique to Gaithersburg facilities.
- Action 5: Require play areas and tot lots to be dispersed through new development.
- Action 6: Develop a plan for Olde Towne Square that will illustrate the City's special heritage.

Objective C: Improve the appearance of the City

- Action 1: Implement the Frederick Avenue Corridor Plan.
- Action 2: Approve and implement the City's draft sign ordinance.
- Action 3: Create a unique City-wide theme for all public signage, such as road and destination signage.
- Action 4: Require developers to install enhanced streetscape with all development and redevelopment.

Objective D: Protect existing landmarks, scenic views, vistas, and structures of special or architectural/historic value within the City of Gaithersburg.

- Action 1: Identify for protection significant landmarks (buildings, bridges, natural resources, historic resources).
- Action 2: Promote individual landmarks through marketing techniques and programs such as the Montgomery County Heritage Tourism Initiative and Arts & Entertainment District.

THEME 2 - REDEVELOPMENT

Gaithersburg is a community that...

Will encourage orderly and managed Redevelopment of aging areas using the themes developed herein, with an emphasis on decisions that ensure the stability of the City and that seek the continuous collaboration of all stakeholders.

Objective A: Utilize the City's 'Smart Growth' Principles to Encourage High Quality Infill Redevelopment.

- Action 1: Promote the TND development option and review past projects for accomplishments.
- Action 2: Design mixed use, housing, commercial, office, industrial and public developments at a pedestrian scale that do not overly dominate the streetscape in order to promote a more livable pattern of development.
- Action 3: Promote the development of a system of walkways, bikeways, and streets that create connections between and among developments.
- Action 4: Establish required buffering for future redevelopment that enhances and improves natural resources.
- Action 5: Increase public green/open space through infrastructure re-design in existing neighborhoods.
- Action 6: Preserve historic and other important structures and amenities during redevelopment.

Objective B: Create Incentives to Encourage Quality Redevelopment.

- Action 1: Reduce the parking requirements for projects that are within close proximity to transit or provide joint surface or structure parking.
- Action 2: Develop a program that allows for the transfer of open/green space requirements to other sites or a fee in lieu of the requirements.
- Action 3: Consider waiving the density or height requirements for a more desired project.
- Action 4: Allow for innovative Stormwater Management practices.
- Action 5: Consider reducing or waiving permit and development fees for more desired projects.

Objective C: Identify Properties for Redevelopment.

- Action 1: Utilize GIS information to assist in the identification of redevelopment opportunities.
- Action 2: Perform cost-benefit analysis of potential redevelopment projects.
- Action 3: Analyze rental housing inspection data, code violation and crime statistics history to assist in identifying properties in need of redevelopment.
- Action 4: Consider redevelopment options in all areas (even those that have recently developed).

Objective D: Continue to Implement and Update City-Wide and Community Plans.

- Action 1: Update Olde Towne Master Plan.
- Action 2: Continue to implement Frederick Avenue Corridor Plan and review the current approval process.
- Action 3: Revise the Zoning Ordinance to be consistent with existing and proposed City zones and land uses and with the Master Plan.

THEME 3 - TOWN CENTERS

Gaithersburg is a community that...

Affirms the designations of the existing Town Centers which offer compact and efficient neighborhoods with vibrant centralized community-based focal points that attractively combine commercial, housing, civic, cultural, educational, transportation, and recreational opportunities.

A Town Center is a compact area with a mix of retail, office and commercial activity, with housing, that serves as a hub of community activity and an economic engine for the City. Easily accessible by area residents, it provides a destination and a gateway to other centers via regional transportation. Town Centers are convenient for people who are on bicycles or on foot. Town Centers are logical places for compact housing development because of their proximity to transit, shopping and employment. Town Centers often offer community services such as libraries and civic offices and act as social gathering places where people take advantage of cultural and recreational activities.

Suitability for Town Centers designation will be considered when:

1. The existing development pattern and zoning is conducive to supporting dense, mixed-use pedestrian oriented places.
2. Current or future access to regional transportation facilities is available.
3. Parks, public/private facilities, schools, community services and commerce can be provided for or planned.
4. Public infrastructure can accommodate future growth and density.
5. A mix of housing choices can be offered.

Objective A: Enhance and preserve the historic feel and appearance of Olde Towne as a downtown Town Center.

- Action 1: Encourage locally owned businesses and actively recruit small- and medium-sized businesses to locate in Olde Towne.
- Action 2: Provide a unique collection of uses (specialty shops, restaurants and other uses) and provide a cultural theme that would foster a distinct destination Town Center
- Action 3: Create places and activities for citizens to participate in and create civic symbols to identify with (downtown park and Bell Tower). Residents should be reconnected with their downtown to take pride and identify it as their place to gather.
- Action 4: Provide residential development in and around downtown, both in upper floors above retail and in urban-style apartments, condominiums and townhouses.
- Action 5: Continue to preserve and emphasize the historic character of Olde Towne and the surrounding area.
- Action 6: Create an art and entertainment overlay district containing theatres, galleries, studios, etc.
- Action 7: Organization of both an open-air flea market and a farmers market.
- Action 8: Retain community services, such as public schools, post office, police station, City Hall, in Olde Towne.

Objective B: Continue to foster the success of Washingtonian as a regional Town Center.

- Action 1: Complete the build-out of the remaining portion of the Town Center adjacent to the lake.
- Action 2: Encourage the developer/owner to increase the cultural activities and provide a seasonal shelter for the performance area located in the existing pedestrian park.
- Action 3: Encourage office, rather than residential, for the remaining density.

Objective C: Stimulate and increase the utilization of Kentlands Market Square as a neighborhood Town Center.

- Action 1: Encourage more general office use in the Town Center to balance the large amount of retail businesses.
- Action 2: Encourage businesses that are more appropriate to serve the adjacent neighborhoods.
- Action 3: Consider increasing density in Market Square in conjunction with the construction of a parking structure.
- Action 4: Redevelop the vacant Upton's property into a mixed used project with a significant multi-family component.
- Action 5: Appoint a committee consisting of residents, merchants, City representatives, and other stakeholders to recommend improvements for the Market Square Town Center.

Objective D: Support and enhance Lakeforest Mall and vicinity.

- Action 1: Improve pedestrian access to mall.
- Action 2: Encourage Montgomery County to incentivize renovations at Cedar Mill Apartments.
- Action 3: Work with Montgomery County to improve the safety, security, and cleanliness of the Lakeforest transit center.
- Action 4: Consider permitting additional density on the mall property.

Objective E: Provide distinct elements to which all Town Centers should adhere.

- Action 1: Encourage structured parking and allow for on-street parking design. The parking should be efficiently and conveniently located to the uses of the Town Center.
- Action 2: Promote the development of a system of walkways, bikeways, and streets that create connections between and among Town Centers and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Action 3: Provide safety and comfort for all users of the area.
- Action 4: Provide compactness and concentrate uses while providing a functional Town Center that addresses circulation, community services, parking, maintenance, housing, and recreation.
- Action 5: Provide an attractive community and preserve the organization and cleanliness of the Town Center.
- Action 6: Provide measures to ensure compatibility between differing, adjacent land uses.
- Action 7: Create places and activities in the Town Center for all age groups.
- Action 8: Establish individual architecture control districts to limit new structures to the approved style and encourage owners to reface their buildings.
- Action 9: Town Center gateways and signage are to be provided. Kiosks will serve as community bulletin boards and alert residents and visitors to upcoming events and Town Center attractions.
- Action 10: Public spaces are encouraged and given strong consideration within any intensely developed commercial or office areas.

Objective F: Revitalize existing commercial centers for potential Town Center designation.

- Action 1: Designate other existing commercial centers for potential redevelopment and/or Town Center designation. (e.g., Quince Orchard Park/Clopper Road commercial area).
- Action 2: Reorient activity on the site to face the street.
- Action 3: Apply new land uses, development and design standards and encourage rezoning of certain properties to allow for mixed-use development.
- Action 4: Reestablish a street pattern that connects with the street pattern of the surrounding community.
- Action 5: Integrate multiple uses (ideally including employment and/or housing) on the site.
- Action 6: Dwelling units shall be an important component and should be thoroughly dispersed throughout in diverse forms and sizes. Provide a range of housing types, to provide for people of all ages and incomes.
- Action 7: Emphasize public spaces for shared activity.

THEME 4 – ENVIRONMENT

Gaithersburg is a community that ...

Preserves and enhances open space and critical environmental areas; highlights natural beauty in its land use plans in order for such areas to support ecological systems, serve as award-winning parks, trails, and recreational facilities where public use is fostered through site design; and ensures a high quality of life that is sustainable for future generations.

Objective A: Protect and restore environmentally sensitive areas during development and redevelopment by promoting land uses that are in balance with, and minimize adverse effects on, the natural environment.

- Action 1: Implement the *Environmental Standards for Development Regulation* to identify and protect natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas as open space amenities, natural habitat areas, and important elements of community design.
- Action 2: Utilize geographic information systems (GIS) to create a map that identifies the City's sensitive areas (e.g., streams, wetlands, 100-year floodplains, buffers, forested areas, steep slopes, habitat areas, poor soils, etc.) that should be protected. Identify areas that are currently protected (e.g., publicly-owned, conservation easements, etc.), and areas that should be the focus of future protection efforts.
- Action 3: Continue to promote the use of the cluster option, particularly in instances where a substantial net increase in the amount of protected land would result.
- Action 4: Require developers to work with the City to implement long-term, continuous monitoring (e.g., streams, stormwater management structures, street trees, forests, and wildlife) to determine the ecological impacts of development, the effectiveness of environmental protection practices, and areas in need of restoration – the level and type of monitoring to be determined as appropriate on a case-by-case basis.

- Action 5: Evaluate open/green space definitions and requirements in the *City of Gaithersburg Zoning Ordinance* and the *Environmental Standards for Development Regulation*.

Objective B: Establish additional parkland.

- Action 1: Evaluate each plan on a case-by-case basis as part of the development process in order to ensure that development and redevelopment are self-sufficient and provide the highest level of recreation service obtainable. As an absolute minimum, developers shall be required to retain at least five percent of the developable area as open space or parkland suitable for active recreation use.
- Action 2: Consider a cash-in-lieu of land ordinance that requires developers to pay into a City Parks and Recreation fund if they cannot provide adequate green space, parklands and recreation facilities on-site as part of their development. The City fund will be used for parkland acquisition and the construction of new recreation facilities.
- Action 3: Actively pursue outside funding sources, including grants and developer proffers, to assist in the creation of new parkland.
- Action 4: Adopt criteria that will identify appropriate parcels for pocket parks, particularly in developed communities, and institute a program that will establish and enhance pocket parks.
- Action 5: Identify specific opportunities to establish additional parkland; including ~~land-swap options and cooperative agreements with homeowners~~ associations and other property owners.
- Action 6: Pursue redevelopment strategies that will increase the availability of open space and parkland. This includes the creation of plazas, fountains, gardens, benches, public art and other park-like features as amenities in redevelopment projects.
- Action 7: Redesign infrastructure in order to increase public green space in existing neighborhoods.

Action 8: Study the desirability and legal feasibility of adopting an open space zoning category to clearly identify public lands.

Objective C: Protect and improve water resources (streams, wetlands, 100-year floodplains, and riparian buffers) which have significant functions and values related to flood protection, sediment and erosion control, water quality, groundwater recharge and discharge, education, vegetation, and fish and wildlife habitat.

Action 1: Utilize the results of ongoing stream assessments to establish stabilization/restoration priority areas to improve water quality, stabilize stream banks and restore aquatic habitat in streams exhibiting deteriorating conditions.

Action 2: Maintain and protect existing stream buffers by replanting native vegetation along unforested buffers and increasing “no mow” areas adjacent to streams in City parks.

Action 3: Encourage citizen volunteers to become involved in stream and watershed protection by expanding the stream clean-up program and implementing a volunteer stream-monitoring program.

Action 4: Consider providing incentives to establish conservation easements along streams when the purchase of property is not possible.

Action 5: Identify options to improve streams and riparian buffers on private property.

Objective D: Improve public and private stormwater management (SWM) facilities; including performance, longevity, safety, ease of maintenance, community acceptance, and environmental benefit.

- Action 1: Develop a Watershed Management Plan to analyze the City's existing water resources, riparian areas, and runoff management practices; establish management goals for subwatersheds based on existing stream conditions, current land uses, and future land use changes; provide overall SWM recommendations for City subwatersheds; and establish an implementation plan.
- Action 2: Retrofit existing stormwater management structures in the City (e.g., Brighton Weir, Rabbitt Road, Woodland Hills, Diamond Farms, and Christman Pond).
- Action 3: Develop an education program (e.g., brochures, web site, cable TV programs, etc.) to reduce non-point source pollution in urban runoff from residential, commercial, industrial, municipal, and transportation land uses and activities.
- Action 4: Complete and maintain a GIS-based inventory of SWM facilities.
- Action 5: Develop an inspection and enforcement program for stormwater management facilities that are both publicly and privately maintained.
- Action 6: Require developers to mitigate adverse stormwater conditions from existing offsite conditions when possible.
- Action 7: Identify opportunities for regional solutions to stormwater management.
- Action 8: Identify specific opportunities to enter into cooperative agreements with homeowners associations and other property owners to improve private SWM facilities.

Objective E: Improve the diversity, health, aesthetics, and tree canopy coverage of the City's urban forest; including trees and understory plants growing in forests, parkland, unimproved lots, yards, and along streets.

- Action 1: Implement regulations associated with the Maryland Forest Conservation Act, Chapter 21 of the City Code (Tree and Vegetation- Public Lands), and Chapter 22 of the City Code (Tree and Forest Conservation) to protect and enhance forest resources.
- Action 2: Develop an urban forestry management program that will conduct a GIS-based inventory of existing street trees, designate guidelines for maintaining all significant trees, establish guidelines for increasing the City's tree canopy cover, and coordinate with the City Beautification Committee to prioritize street tree enhancement projects.
- Action 3: Develop a map of reforestation priority areas; including stream valley buffers, steep slopes, connections between existing forested areas, potential habitat areas, and areas of scenic value.
- Action 4: Direct afforestation/reforestation funds to replant native plant species in reforestation priority areas,
- Action 5: Develop planting standards that encourage the use of a variety of native plants that provide aesthetic, wildlife habitat, resource conservation, and watershed protection benefits.
- Action 6: Develop a planting master plan for the City's main transportation corridors to promote an attractive distinct identity.
- Action 7: Seek funding from outside sources to encourage reforestation on public and private lands (e.g., Department of Natural Resources' Buffer Incentive Program, Urban and Community Forestry Funds, etc.).

Objective F: Enhance the quality, location, connectivity, accessibility, and value of the City's green infrastructure (the interconnected networks of open space, parks, natural areas, forests, waterways, and wildlife habitat).

- Action 1: Develop standards (including signage, landscaping, lighting, benches, fountains, trash receptacles, artwork, etc.) for different types of parkland. Implement the standards in existing parks and require future parks to comply with these standards.
- Action 2: During the development process, acquire remaining lands and easements needed to complete the perimeter trail, regional connections, and more internal links in order to improve accessibility to natural areas, increase opportunities for recreation, and promote alternative modes of transportation.
- Action 3: Manage all City parks, grounds, and recreational facilities in a manner that meets public safety concerns, recreation needs, habitat protection goals, natural resources protection needs, and pollution prevention goals (e.g., utilize an Integrated Pest Management approach, eliminate fire or safety hazards, remove hazardous or diseased trees, control invasive species, stabilize and restore streams, and improve landscapes, habitat, and buffers).
- Action 4: Increase citizen volunteer participation, including schools and volunteer committees such as the Environmental Affairs Committee, the Beautification Committee, and ad-hoc Parks, Recreation, and Culture committees, to enhance the City's green infrastructure (e.g., park clean ups, the Adopt-A-Park program, etc.).

Objective G: Enhance habitat areas to increase the variety and quantity of fish, wildlife, and native plant species throughout the urban area in a manner compatible with other urban development and activities.

- Action 1: Require developers to create and implement Wildlife Management Plans when development is expected to impact wildlife and habitats.
- Action 2: Prepare and implement plans to enhance the wildlife habitat value of ponds, stream valleys and other public open spaces.
- Action 3: Develop local strategies (e.g., Department of Natural Resources Wild Acres Program, Bayscaping, etc.) to encourage appropriate wildlife habitat on private properties.
- Action 4: Identify existing habitat locations for rare, threatened, endangered, in need of conservation, and/or Maryland watchlist species as they become known.

Objective H: Encourage green building principles to be applied in both public and private development in order to support environmentally sensitive design, construction, operation, and maintenance of buildings and landscapes.

- Action 1: Create incentives to encourage green building; such as financial incentives, density incentives, permit facilitation, recognition, and technical advice.
- Action 2: Educate staff, the local development community, and citizens about the principles and benefits of green building.
- Action 3: Inventory relevant codes, regulations, and programs now implemented that could be viewed as part of a comprehensive green building program and identify existing gaps and policies that may inhibit resource efficiency.
- Action 4: Investigate resources of existing organizations and capitalize on their previous efforts, know-how, and strengths.
- Action 5: Investigate outside sources of funding and technical support (e.g., Maryland Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Green Buildings Council, U.S. Department of Energy) to apply green building principles to public projects.

Objective I: Participate in regional efforts to reduce solid waste, air, noise, visual, and lighting pollution to ensure a high quality of life that is sustainable for future generations.

- Action 1: Educate the community and businesses about litter prevention, solid waste reduction, the reuse of materials, environmentally sound disposal of solid waste, composting, and recycling (e.g., America Recycles Day, Environmental Awareness Week, etc.).
- Action 2: Develop a mandatory recycling program for multifamily-dwelling units.
- Action 3: Adopt land use pattern designations that cluster services and residential uses to promote the use of transit, thereby reducing automobile use and air pollution.
- Action 4: Support regional noise abatement programs (e.g., Montgomery County Noise Control Ordinance) and consider opportunities to reduce noise impacts of development on adjacent properties; such as noise-conscious site design; noise source controls; increased setbacks for noise sources from adjacent dwellings; fences, walls or landscaping that serve as noise buffers; and the use of soundproofing materials and double-glazed windows.
- Action 5: Carefully review lighting plans during the site planning process and encourage all new development and redevelopment to design and maintain outdoor lighting systems that provide safety, utility and security, as well as prevent misdirected or excessive artificial light and energy inefficiency.

THEME 5 - TRANSPORTATION

Theme: Gaithersburg is a community that...

Provides a wide number of transportation choices to overcome pressing transportation issues, including but not limited to encouraging mixed-use development, use of transit, bicycling, and pedestrian oriented urban design to reduce reliance on the automobile.

Objective A: Work with other government agencies, including the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, to ensure the economic vitality and high quality of life in the city and region by improving the regional transportation network.

- Action 1: Coordinate with other government and agencies to identify and make improvements to congested travel corridors.
- Action 2: Provide strong policy guidance to the State, County, and the Council of Governments regarding future improvements to County, State and federal highways.
- Action 3: Ensure compatibility of local transportation projects with regional transportation facilities.
- Action 4: Require preservation of right of ways for future transportation projects.
- Action 5: Support strategies that reduce peak-hour travel such as carpooling, telecommuting, bicycling, etc.
- Action 6: Enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with Montgomery County concerning the use of Impact Tax Revenues collected from development.

Objective B: Limit new development when the transportation system can not support an increase in volume.

- Action 1: Consider current congestion, funded improvements, and planned improvements when determining whether proposed development can be supported.
- Action 2: Mandate appropriate mitigation in order to minimize impacts to the transportation system caused by all development. Appropriate Mitigation measures are unique to each development. Mitigation measures can include but not be limited to the following items: Road Widening; Intersection Improvements; Hiker-Biker Trail and Sidewalk Construction; Internal Development Circulation and Ingress/Egress Modifications; Internal and External Parking Improvements; Ride Sharing Programs and Other Traffic Reduction Measures.
- Action 3: Mandate that proposed development which generates 50 or more peak hour trips will not be approved if it is found that unacceptable critical lane volumes of 1,450 exist at nearby critical intersections (taking into account existing and programmed transportation improvements), unless the developer makes transportation improvements to that would improve the existing Level of Service (LOS). However, simply meeting the critical lane volume standard of 1,450 does not guarantee that additional improvements can not be required.
- Action 4: Continue to evaluate adequacy of the transportation system through specific studies as part of development and annexation process.

Objective C: Improve the efficiency and safety of roads and intersection operations.

- Action 1: Conduct a comprehensive study of all major roads and intersections and make recommendations to improve road and intersection operations.
- Action 2: Monitor accident and congestion data to assist in prioritizing improvements.

- Action 3: Work with Montgomery County and the State of Maryland to implement the recommendations resulting from Actions 1 and 2 above.

Objective D: Support transportation needs in local neighborhoods.

- Action 1: Identify strategies to route through traffic away from affected local streets.
- Action 2: Carefully consider future roadway widenings within the City to assure that neighborhoods are not adversely impacted.
- Action 3: Continue to address neighborhood traffic calming needs.

Objective E: Promote alternatives to single-occupant vehicle trips, such as shared-ride programs, transit, bicycling, and walking to reduce pollution and promote mobility for all residents.

- Action 1: Consider forming a Transportation Management District in cooperation with Montgomery County and City of Rockville.
- Action 2: Continue to develop a transit-friendly community by providing infrastructure, transit shelters, pull-off lanes, and hiker-biker links to existing and planned residential and commercial developments, public facilities such as parks and schools, and transportation facilities such as park-and-ride lots and rail centers.
- Action 3: Work closely with Montgomery County and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments to expand bus services to better serve local neighborhoods, and commercial and employment areas.
- Action 4: Promote transit as a more attractive travel choice through local advertising and endorsement in public service announcements.
- Action 5: Consider public transportation options for new public improvement projects such as parks and other public land-uses.

Objective F: Provide for safe, convenient and enjoyable travel by bicyclists in the area and create connections to regional trails.

- Action 1:** Continue to implement the adopted Bikeways and Pedestrian Plan by identifying and prioritizing specific pedestrian and bicycle improvements including designated routes, road signage, new trails and sidewalks, and bike lanes.
- Action 2:** Fully integrate the consideration of bicyclists needs into community and the site design process to create bicycle facilities concurrently with development.
- Action 3:** Target pedestrian and bicycle improvements during the reconstruction of existing roads.
- Action 4:** Accommodate bicyclists on roadways by providing on-street bicycle facilities on arterial and collector roadways when and where possible.
- Action 5:** Eliminate bicycle barriers and hazards in the design of hiker-biker trails, intersections, bridges and overpasses, and railroad crossings.
- Action 6:** Provide hiker-biker trails along planned hiker-biker routes when planning and developing parks, open space areas, linear corridors, and redevelopment/infill projects.

Objective G: Use a combination of education, enforcement and engineering tools to improve pedestrian, bicyclist and driver safety.

- Action 1: Provide safe walking routes that connect communities to schools, transit, recreational facilities, commercial and retail areas, and other communities.
- Action 2: Improve safety near schools through increased enforcement.
- Action 3: Continue to use sidewalk CIP program fund construction of “missing links” of sidewalk throughout the City.
- Action 4: Work with Montgomery County to implement its recommendations as detailed in the report titled “Montgomery County Blue Ribbon Panel On Pedestrian and Traffic Safety.”
- Action 5: Develop a pedestrian and bicyclist education program.
- Action 6: Utilize the City’s web site and local access television as information and education tools and create new cable television public service announcements that inform drivers of traffic circle and intersection operations to promote public safety.
- Action 7: Coordinate with other government agencies and Montgomery County to evaluate the success of countdown timers for pedestrian crossings and identify intersections where countdown timers for pedestrian crossings can be installed.

Objective H: Build transportation facilities that express a strong sense of place through a coordinated City-wide design.

- Action 1: Continue to install Gaithersburg prototype bus shelters in partnership with private contractor.
- Action 2: Adopt Thoroughfare Design Standards.

Action 3: Develop prototype for City's future light rail transit stops.

Action 4: Develop Hiker-Biker Trails with related signage that is unique to the City of Gaithersburg.

THEME 6 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Gaithersburg is a community that...

Has community services and public facilities that adequately serve the citizens and are planned to expand in an orderly, fiscally cost-effective manner to achieve sustainable goals.

Objective A: Limit new development where public utilities, facilities, and services cannot be established without unduly burdening the existing service provision or users.

- Action 1: Evaluate development proposals considering their indirect costs (e.g., recreation programs, public safety, etc.).
- Action 2: Ensure that the revenues from new development support the cost of community improvements and services that must be provided to address growth.
- Action 3: Maximize public/private partnerships in infrastructure development.
- Action 4: Mandate an appropriate percentage of open space in new development.

Objective B: Implement the master plan for “Parks, Recreation, and Open Space for the 21st Century.”

- Action 1: Evaluate each plan on a case-by-case basis as part of the development process in order to ensure that development and redevelopment are self-sufficient and provide the highest level of recreation service obtainable. As an absolute minimum, developers shall be required to retain at least 5% of the developable area as open space or parkland suitable for active recreation use.
- Action 2: Expand the current trail network, including more connections to regional trails.
- Action 3: Implement development plans for the Lakelands Park, Lakeland’s Recreation Center, Bohrer Park at Summit Hall Farm, and other City-owned parks.

- Action 4: Establish new recreational facilities and renovate existing facilities at City-owned parks as needed.
- Action 5: Expand the recreation programming to better address the needs of the City's seniors, cultural groups, teens at risk, and cultural arts enthusiasts.
- Action 6: Create and implement a comprehensive cultural arts plan (facilities and programs).
- Action 7: Continue to expand the Art in Public Places program by focusing on private donations.

Objective C: Maintain the Community Facilities Plan to serve as a general inventory of City-owned and operated facilities available to Gaithersburg residents.

- Action 1: Ensure that Gaithersburg has adequate municipal facilities to serve the needs of the residents.
- Action 2: Update annually the Community Facilities Map and inventory.
- Action 3: Continue to evaluate the use and needs of each facility (building, outbuilding, structure, grounds) on an annual basis through the budget process.

Objective D: Continue to provide stewardship of City-owned and operated historic resources to reflect the understanding of the City's heritage and expertise in maintenance of older structures, their carrying capacity, and their interpretation.

- Action 1: Construct an interpretive historic park at the Observatory.
- Action 2: Evaluate the City-owned historic resources to determine feasibility of interpretation and adaptive reuse.
- Action 3: Evaluate and support the Museum Consortium efforts.
- Action 4: Investigate the addition of historic displays commemorating the City's history in all City-owned and operated buildings.
- Action 5: Encourage connection of Gaithersburg to the Montgomery County Heritage Tourism program.

Objective E: Establish a safe and accessible repository for all archival materials held in trust by the City for its residents.

- Action 1: Conduct an inventory of materials to be archived.
- Action 2: Develop a phased plan of implementation for placement in appropriate archival storage.
- Action 3: Develop a research center/area with strong oversight for proper cataloguing, imaging, and access.

THEME 7 - HOUSING

Gaithersburg is a community that...

Offers a range of housing choices, while preserving the character of existing neighborhoods and providing connectivity to adjacent areas of employment, nature, recreation, services, and shopping.

Objective A: Encourage the development of single family homes (including townhomes) where housing is appropriate to offset the current housing imbalance.

- Action 1: Encourage the development of single family homes (including townhomes) where housing is appropriate to offset the current housing imbalance.
- Action 2: Pursue annexation of appropriate parcels for construction of single family homes.
- Action 3: Encourage infill housing and the use of the Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) option.

Objective B: Permit additional multi-family dwellings only to support existing town centers, encourage redevelopment, or comply with pre-existing annexation agreements.

- Action 1: Where multi-family dwellings are deemed appropriate, require condominium uses unless it can be demonstrated that rental apartment uses are in the public interest.
- Action 2: Consider approval of multi-family dwellings in or near the existing town centers.
- Action 3: Consider approval of multi-family dwellings to encourage redevelopment of dilapidated properties.

Objective C: Ensure that designated apartment communities remain affordable and under existing controls.

- Action 1: Continue City involvement and partial ownership of Diamond Square Apartments.
- Action 2: Work with the Housing Opportunities Commission to ensure that Forest Oak Towers remains an affordable community for senior citizens.
- Action 3: Monitor the rents to ensure that the Oaks at Olde Towne and Lakewood Commons comply with the area median income requirements mandated by State financing.

Objective D: Improve the condition of the existing housing stock.

- Action 1: Encourage the redevelopment of aging apartment complexes.
- Action 2: Continue to conduct joint inspections with homeowner's associations.
- Action 3: Continue the Neighborhood Matching Grant program.
- Action 4: Work with Montgomery County on providing low interest home improvement loans to qualified homeowners.
- Action 5: Update Property Maintenance Code at least every three years.
- Action 6: Work with Montgomery County to develop rehabilitation loans for small apartment complexes.
- Action 7: Modify rental housing fee credit program.
- Action 8: Continue aggressive enforcement directed at problem properties.
- Action 9: Hold Neighborhood Improvement Charrettes as appropriate.

Objective E: Encourage a variety of architectural styles.

- Action 1: Preserve the approved architectural standards for designated areas of the City.
- Action 2: Encourage a mix of builders with a variety of architectural styles to participate in the development of new communities.

Objective F: Ensure that the current and future housing stock allows residents to remain in the City as their financial, employment, and familial situations change.

- Action 1: Determine current in- and out-migration patterns for the populations in the City and County.
- Action 2: Look at market studies to determine general housing preferences by age, sex, occupational status, marital status, presence of children, household income, etc.
- Action 3: Determine the impact of public schools on housing preferences and work with MCPS to address any concerns with the current schools.

THEME 8 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Gaithersburg is a community that...

Encourages Economic Development with important jobs and businesses located only where infrastructure or capacity exists or can be improved.

Objective A: Provide employment and commercial opportunities in close proximity to residential areas.

- Action 1: Make certain appropriate land use designations for local commercial and employment uses are balanced throughout the City.
- Action 2: Identify existing business districts throughout the City which need better infrastructure or appropriate zoning to strengthen their business core.
- Action 3: Identify improvements in local transportation links between existing residential communities and business areas to facilitate home-to-work trips.

Objective B: Determine if a balanced jobs to housing ratio is needed to ensure the City's sustainability.

- Action 1: Determine the current ratio of jobs to housing within the corporate limits.
- Action 2: Research regional growths, compare data, and determine what impact developments have on the City.
- Action 3: Identify specific land use areas for future development that could accomplish desired sustainability.

Objective C: Build on the City's strength as a science and technology center.

- Action 1: Designate large contiguous undeveloped areas for technology-oriented uses that are well sited from a transportation perspective.
- Action 2: Develop and strengthen partnerships with State and County Departments of Economic Development, High Technology Council, the Gaithersburg/Germantown Chamber of Commerce and legislative bodies to work with these businesses to encourage their location within the City.
- Action 3: Utilize existing local tax incentive package (including reduction in development fees), to incentivize biotech users to locate in the City.
- Action 4: Evaluate need for biotech zone that provides development incentives for such uses.

Objective D: Provide educational opportunities that encourage employability of residents and increasing wage rates.

- Action 1: Continue to foster and strengthen relationship between MCPS, appropriate educational institutions, and the City.
- Action 2: Evaluate potential sites for schools and private educational institutions.
Encourage businesses to partner in education and workforce development initiatives.

Objective E: Focus redevelopment opportunities on underutilized sites.

- Action 1: Establish criteria for underutilized sites based on existing assessment data.
- Action 2: Identify specific underutilized sites.
- Action 3: Identify development partners.
- Action 4: Investigate joint development ventures.
- Action 5: Facilitate assemblage of properties to provide for more efficient use of land.

Objective F: Create equitable and balanced opportunities throughout the corporate limits for retail uses.

- Action 1: Continually monitor retail health of the City through cooperation with rental groups, shopping center owners, and the Chamber of Commerce.
- Action 2: Identify retail uses missing from City's inventory.
- Action 3: Identify geographical sectors where data indicates retail saturation.
- Action 4: Identify underutilized (existing) retail sites whose characteristics may be more suitable for non-retail use.
- Action 5: Designs for infill retail developments should follow the City's adopted Smart Growth Principles and the Master Plans for Olde Towne and the Frederick Avenue corridor.

Objective G: Encourage compatible development when non-residential uses are adjacent to residential communities.

- Action 1: Avoid land use designation of non-compatible uses adjacent to designated employment and commercial sites.
- Action 2: Encourage infrastructure improvements that serve both residential and commercial uses.
- Action 3: Develop and implement design standards to assure compatibility and connectivity between adjacent land uses.

Objective H: Diversify local economy so that approved development can serve a variety of industries.

- Action 1: Evaluate current mix of industries within City.
- Action 2: Identify mixed-use land use designations for appropriate locations.
- Action 3: Evaluate zoning ordinance and building codes to provide flexibility in design and uses to facilitate retrofitting of buildings.
- Action 4: Provide adequate parking at time of site plan approval to service current and possible future use of buildings.

Objective I: Cooperate with regional jurisdictions to market the Gaithersburg area for tourist and convention benefits.

- Action 1: Build strong relationships with adjacent cities, County's Conference and Visitors Board and State Office of Tourism.
- Action 2: Evaluate pending sign ordinance's impact on hospitality industry.
- Action 3: Market City's parks recreation and cultural attractions through existing hotels.
- Action 4: Cooperate with Montgomery County Heritage Tourism Initiative.

Objective J: Find innovative parking solutions that support development activities.

- Action 1: Encourage shared use parking and parking structures that support multiple businesses or industries.
- Action 2: Identify areas within City with significant parking shortages.
- Action 3: Examine highway corridors for potential on-street parking opportunities during off-peak hours.

Objective K: Re-evaluate the City's Maximum Expansion Limits (MELs), adopted in 1972 to consider enlargement of corporate limits.

- Action 1: Identify properties adjacent to the City whose annexation could benefit the City economically.
- Action 2: Pinpoint substandard properties adjacent to the City, annexation of which could facilitate the property's redevelopment or enhance its appearance through rigorous City code enforcement.
- Action 3: Actively pursue highly desirable properties for annexation via incentives.

THEME 9 - EDUCATION

Gaithersburg is a community that ...

Coordinates closely with the Board of Education so they can assure that adequate school capacity is available when considering new development, growth in existing neighborhoods and ever-changing demographics. Schools shall be sited so that they are well incorporated into the core of a community.

Objective A: Mitigate impact of development in Gaithersburg on the quality of education in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS).

- Action 1: Utilizing contributions from developers, create City Educational Fund to leverage MCPS capital projects.
- Action 2: When a project meets the Montgomery County's Annual Growth Policy (AGP) schools test but not the City's goal of 100 percent of capacity without borrowing capacity between clusters, require the developer to contribute to the City's Educational Fund. As an alternative, require other appropriate mitigation measures deemed to be in the public interest.
- Action 3: Develop appropriate phasing schedules for all residential projects.
- Action 4: Seek enabling legislation from the General Assembly that would permit the City to establish special taxing areas to fund infrastructure improvements.

Objective B: Work with the Board of Education to enhance schools attended by Gaithersburg residents.

- Action 1: Request regular reports for the Mayor and City Council by Montgomery County Public Schools on capacity of schools, proposed boundary changes, and status of CIP.
- Action 2: Continue to be involved in future school site selection processes.
- Action 3: Continue to work with school staff via Education Committee to improve the public perception of schools attended by City residents.

Objective C: Enhance the continued relationship of the City of Gaithersburg with local schools.

- Action 1: Continue City's annual grant program to support school initiatives through the Education Committee.
- Action 2: Maintain relationship between the City and school representatives through the Education Committee.
- Action 3: Continue City involvement in education programs in the elementary schools.
- Action 4: Work with MCPS to establish an education program about City of Gaithersburg government and land use planning as a part of the Montgomery County local government curriculum in area schools.
- Action 5: Continue and enhance the "Adopt a School Program."
- Action 6: Continue to recognize excellence in local schools (e.g., academic and athletic activities).
- Action 7: Continue to support initiatives to improve academic excellence in schools attended by Gaithersburg residents through the Education Committee.

Objective D: Continue working with the Board of Education, Montgomery County Government and the State of Maryland to foster continual upgrades to schools to meet the needs of City residents.

- Action 1: Continue lobbying the Board of Education, the County Council and the General Assembly for funding for CIP projects.
- Action 2: Work closely with Montgomery County Planning Board on developing their recommendation to the County Council on the AGP schools test.
- Action 3: Urge the County Council to amend the AGP schools test to eliminate the practice of borrowing from adjoining clusters and counting capacity before actual construction funds are appropriated.